

Session 7

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A new approach to measuring the provision of adult social care

In the UK, government spends just over € 20 billion per year on providing or purchasing care to meet the needs of various adult client groups: these include the elderly, and those with physical or learning disabilities or with mental health needs. The largest part is spent on the provision of care in a residential setting: for these, the main unit of measurement is a week of residential care bought, distinguishing between various client groups or settings.

Within the categories identified, each week of care is assumed to be of constant volume per client and over time. This is not an appropriate assumption as there is ample evidence that, over time, more is being provided in a week of care as clients' needs become more complex. This greater complexity arises because government is shifting resources towards those complex cases which require more resources because they meet higher levels of needs.

To meet this challenge, an alternative output measure is being developed. It identifies 9 different dimensions of care being received: these include nutrition, safety, personal cleanliness, social participation and control over daily life. The amount delivered of each dimension has to be measured for each client group. This is not possible from current data collection which is limited to measures such as weeks of care bought.

The new measure will be computed in two stages:

- estimate the difference, in volume terms, between:
 - the status of each client before care is provided and
 - what their status would be if all the needs that could potentially be met had actually been met;
- estimate what proportion of that difference has actually been met

The paper will include ideas on how these estimation challenges might be solved.